

PROTOCOLS FOR MAIL HANDLING

General:

Every business and organization should assess and review their protocols for handling mail. Common sense and care should be used in inspecting and opening mail or packages.

Examine unopened envelopes for foreign bodies or powder.
Do not open letters with your hands: use a letter opener.

Open letters and packages with a minimum of movement to avoid spilling any contents. Each organization should assess whether it is a possible target for criminal acts. Based on this assessment, you may wish to take additional precautions such as wearing gloves and restricting the opening of mail to a limited number of trained individuals.

What Types of Letters May be Suspect:

Any letter or package that has suspicious or threatening messages written on it Letters with oily stains

Envelopes that are lopsided, rigid, bulky, discolored or have a strange odor

Envelopes with no return address

Unexpected envelopes from foreign countries

No postage or non-cancelled postage

Improper spelling of common names, places or titles

FOR SUSPECT ENVELOPES:

DO NOT OPEN THE ENVELOPE OR PACKAGE.

LEAVE it and EVACUATE the room.

KEEP others from entering.

NOTIFY your supervisor, who should call 911 or the local law enforcement authorities.

FOR PACKAGES THAT ARE OPENED AND WHICH CONTAIN SUSPICIOUS MATERIAL

DO NOT PANIC

Anthrax organisms can cause skin infection, gastrointestinal infection or pulmonary infection.

To do so, the organism must be rubbed into abraded skin, swallowed, or inhaled as a fine, aerosolized mist. It does not leap into one's body. All forms of disease are generally treatable with antibiotics.

Anthrax cannot be easily aerosolized out of an envelope or package containing powder. The same facts and conditions are generally true for other bacteria likely to be considered as biological weapons.

CONTAIN THE EXPOSURE

Close off the room (doors and windows), do not allow anyone other than qualified emergency personnel to enter.

Close the package or envelope to limit additional exposure.

Do not clean powder up; keep others away.

Do not touch your eyes, nose or any other part of your body.

If possible, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.

If clothing is heavily contaminated, don't brush vigorously.

If possible, close down the buildings heating/air conditioning/ventilation system.

Make a list of all people who had actual contact with the powder for investigating authorities.

NOTIFY APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES

Immediately contact:

911 or your local law enforcement authorities,
your local FBI field office, and
your local health department.